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UNH Media Relations

Corporal Punishment Expert Available To Discuss Proposed Anti-Spanking Legislation In Massachusetts

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UNH Media Relations

November 29, 2007

DURHAM, N.H. -- Murray Straus, co-director of the Family Research Laboratory and professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire, is available to discuss the effects of spanking and Massachusetts' proposed anti-spanking legislation. He can be reached at 603-862-2594 or by email at murray.straus@unh.edu.

Widely considered the foremost researcher in his field, Straus has studied spanking by large and representative samples of American parents since 1969. He is the author of "Beating The Devil Out Of Them: Corporal Punishment In American Families And Its Effects On Children."

"Although research on the effectiveness of spanking shows it helps correct misbehavior, we also know that spanking does not work better than other modes of correction, such as time out, explaining, and depriving a child of privileges," Straus said.

"The research clearly shows the gains from spanking come at a big cost. These included weakening the tie between children and parents, and increasing the probability that the child will hit other children or their parents, and as adults, hit a dating or marital partner. Spanking also slows down mental development and lowers the probability of a child doing well in school," he said. "There is more than 90 percent agreement on these facts in more than 100 studies on spanking's side effects. One would be hard-pressed to find another aspect of parenting and child behavior where the results are so consistent."

Much of Straus' research on spanking can be downloaded from <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2>.

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